

Senate Bill 431 - Maryland Sign Language Interpreters Act
sponsored by Senator King and Guzzone

Mister Chairman and Members of the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee:

My name is Jonathan Summers. I am a Deaf individual and I live in Maryland. I am writing this testimony to ask you to support **SB431 - Maryland Sign Language Interpreter Act of 2021** sponsored by Senator King and Guzzone.

This bill would require licensure for sign language interpreters working in the state of Maryland and help to ensure that members of the Deaf community have access to qualified interpreters. When unqualified interpreters are allowed to work unchecked, the impact on the communities they serve can be a matter of life or death. This bill provides both a mechanism for licensing interpreters and a means for relief in the form of a grievance process.

Licensing for interpreters helps to ensure that they are qualified to provide equal and equitable access wherever they may be called upon to do so. Having qualified interpreters helps Deaf and DeafBlind individuals trust that they can communicate clearly and accurately. With licensed interpreters, Deaf/DeafBlind people can trust they are getting accurate medical information from their doctors, understand what's being said by a lawyer, and successfully communicate wherever and whenever they use an interpreter.

As a constituent, I ask you to please support SB431.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Summers

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